

Local Court Receives State Certification

The Substance Abuse Mental Illness (SAMI) Docket of the Butler County Court of Common Pleas has earned final certification from the Ohio Supreme Court's Commission on Specialized Dockets.

In order to receive the certification, the local court had to submit an application, undergo a site visit, and provide specific program materials in response to certification standards that went in to effect in January 2014.

Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor congratulated the Butler County Court of Common Pleas and Judge Powers for receiving final certification.

"Specialized dockets divert offenders toward criminal justice initiatives that employ tools and tailored services to treat and rehabilitate the offender so they can become productive members of society," said Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor. "Studies have shown this approach works by reducing recidivism while saving tax dollars."

Specialized dockets are courts that are dedicated to specific types of offenses or offenders and use a combination of different techniques for holding offenders accountable while also addressing the underlying causes of their behavior. There are more than 210 specialized dockets in Ohio courts that deal with issues such as:

- Drugs and Alcohol
- Mental Health
- Domestic Violence
- Human Trafficking

The standards provide a minimum level of uniform practices for specialized dockets throughout Ohio, and allow local courts to innovate and tailor to meet their community's needs and resources.

Judge Powers is honored to receive final certification for the SAMI Court Docket. He stated: "We are happy with the results of the SAMI Court Program, and the commitment of the Program and its partners in assisting our clients reach the ultimate goal of living a clean, sober, productive, law-abiding lifestyle while achieving stable mental health."

The certification requirements include establishing eligibility requirements, evaluating effectiveness of the specialized docket, and assembling a treatment team for implementing daily operations of the specialized docket. The team can include licensed treatment providers, law enforcement, court personnel, and is headed by the specialized docket judge.

The Commission on Specialized Dockets has 22 members who advise the Supreme Court and its staff regarding the promotion of statewide rules and uniform standards concerning specialized

dockets in Ohio courts; the development and delivery of specialized docket services to Ohio courts; and the creation of training programs for judges and court personnel. The commission makes all decisions regarding final certification.